TAKING MASONRY SERIOUSLY

If we mistake not, there are signs to show that men, especially young men, are more and more disposed to take Masonry seriously, both as a principle to be held and a life to be lived. There are exceptions, to be sure, as we learn from a letter before us, wherein a Brother frankly confesses that his only interest in the Fraternity is in what he calls “the big eats and the big meets." Surely a mistake was made when this Brother was admitted to the Order at all. He is in the wrong pew, having no interest in the intellectual aims of Masonry, much less with its opportunity for practical human ministry, and our Lodges must have the courage of the old-time Masons who sent such men back to the Guilds, as unworthy of the fellowship of serious men.

From another letter we read:

> "With a leading and prominent Odd Fellow in the East with a zealous Knight of Pythias in the West, and the Exalted Ruler of the Elks and the high muck-a-muck of the Eagles in the South, and with the average member of the Masonic body belonging to at least four or five other orders, sometimes the thoughtful member must think that our Order looks and is a little bit foolish. For the Jew to attend early mass, for the Catholic to be superintendent of the Presbyterian Sunday School for a leading Methodist to expound the Talmud to a Boy's Class in the Synagogue, might be highly desirable, yet none the less inexplicable. Perhaps the time will again come when Masonry will be a living, active force for good and greatness.
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> Frankly, I have looked upon most Masonic literature as largely worthless, and oftentimes actually harmful. The childish legends that pass for Masonic "History" seem little short of astonishing. In looking over the June issue of The Builder however, I read the article entitled "Our Thucydides," by Prof. Pound of Harvard University, and I thought that if such articles are to appear, perhaps there is now active hope for the great Order and a proper understanding of its history and aims. Therefore I renew my membership in the Society, in the hope that the time of "hot air," idle legends and extraordinarily foolish "history" has none by."

Not gone by, Brother, but it is the work of this Society to help hasten its exit from the earth, in behalf of clear seeing and sane thinking in the fields of Masonic history, symbolism, philosophy and practical endeavor. If the leaders of the Order are wise, they will see in this thoughtful and forthright letter one reason for the falling off in Lodge attendance and failing interest in Masonry. Thinking men want the truth, not silly legends, fantastic history, and mathematical puzzles, and if they do not find it they will reckon Masonry as only one of many such orders, having little or nothing to set it apart from the rest. Of course, if Masonry is only a dramatic Club, whose performances prelude a banquet and a smoker, let us admit it, and not keep up the hoax of having a noble history, a profound philosophy, and a beautiful symbolism. If there is nothing in it, like the King of Hearts in Alice in Wonderland, when the mysterious document was brought into his court, "If there is nothing in it we are saved a lot of bother, as we need not try to find it." But if Masonry has anything of value to teach men, has any real purpose and definite mission, it surely behooves us to study it and rededicate ourselves to its service.

BRIEFER NOTES

Our friend, the distinguished editor of the Occult Review, thinks that the December number of The Builder is the best we have so far issued - that being the last copy he has had opportunity to read. "One would say that it almost embraces the whole field of the subject-general which brought the Society into being," he remarks, adding that it is a memorable number, finishing a memorable year's labor; "and we look for greater things to come." He makes particular note of the article by Brother Ball on the Hiramic Legend and the Lost Word, and the brief essay by Brother Gage on Building Designs. He is interested in the old Temple of Heaven in which the Scottish Rite degrees were conferred, as Brother Lobingier related. He congratulates us on the excellent index, and pronounces the work of the Year good from first to last.

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